Colleen Gutwein O'Neal

Age: 38

(additional info included in essay)

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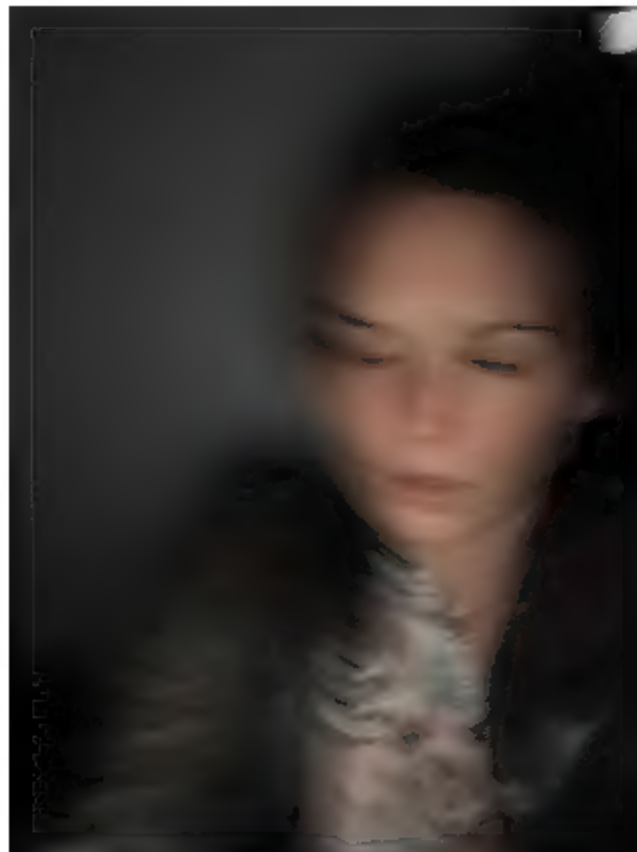
www.colleengutwein.com

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via email (colleengutwein@gmail.com)

Thank you for collecting this information for the library's archive. Attached are my essay and a self-portrait taken during quarantine.

Sincerely,
Colleen

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May 31, 2020

I have been asked by Noelle Lorraine Williams to submit the experimental Instagram projects I worked on with my photography students from Rutgers University. There is one Instagram account, @runewarkphoto1 bean by my spring 2020 class, and now being continued with the summer 2020 class. I have also made an archive of this project (up to the end of spring 2020 thus far) which is being stored on my personal computer.

Sincerely,

Colleen

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I have been part of the Newark arts community for around 15 years. I have dedicated the past 8 years to documenting artists in the community for The Newark Artists Photo Documentary Project, I am currently a volunteer at Index Art Center, a community partner at SHINE Portrait Studio, and a part time lecturer at Rutgers University in Newark teaching photography and contemporary art.

As the quarantine began my entire life shifted. I lost my freelance business, I was unable to work in my studio, and I lost the exhibitions I was working on for the upcoming year, both on curatorial and artistic levels. I immediately started pouring myself into the classes I was teaching at Rutgers; figuring out how to use new computer programs to be able to effectively teach my students, and try to give them a comparable education to what they would receive in our 6 hours per week hands-on studio class. I became stressed and worried about my students being able to balance their lives and continue their education while trying to relocate from their dorms back home, care for sick family members, and work on the front lines in their "essential" jobs outside of school. Making sure all of my students were able to learn remotely and keep up with the lack of the computer lab in school created it's own unique challenges.

While my writing class had an easier transition, I had to get more creative with my photography class. We started an experimental group Instagram page @runewarkphoto1 so the students could share their pandemic experiences with each other and the world. It was a way to share stories, but also keep the students connected to each other as everyone felt life spinning out of control. This was one of the most positive experiences so far in quarantine, and my summer 2020 photo students have now picked up the torch and will be continuing to tell their individual stories on the same experimental Instagram page.

After the first month of quarantine I received a call from a very close family member that another very close family member was diagnosed with a late stage of cancer. The chemo treatments would start, and I would not be able to travel to where my family was, not able to help, only sit here and wait for the call that I am needed to come in as back-up and help out. As I watched friends battle COVID-19 on the front lines of the hospitals, as grocery store employees, and other essential workers, I knew I had to stay home. My fear is the same as many right now - that I will never get to see my loved ones again, that I will never get to hug them and tell them I love them.

I write this on the last day of May, a day after the peaceful protests in Newark of George Floyd's murder and so many others before him. I think of all the people who even before the pandemic did not get the chance to have a last hug, or say goodbye to someone they loved, due to the lynchings that have raged in this country for centuries. My biggest fear is the lack of empathy for each other and the divisiveness of the sitting president, which is of course only the ugly face of the racist machine. My fear is that we will go back to the same country we left before the pandemic, that no progress will me made, that daily life will become more draconian.

My hopes for the future are held in the beautiful and bright, open-minded and empathetic students I have the pleasure to teach. They are introspective and sensitive and understand instinctively how to care for each other during this time. I hope I still have the opportunity to teach them as Rutgers and the Union square-off to decide the fate of their part-time lecturers. Ultimately I hope that we, as a country, can openly tackle our racist history, listen to our scientists, and truly do what is best for the health of our nation.

"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in."
- Anonymous

GROUP PROJECT #4

EXPERIMENTAL INSTAGRAM GROUP PAGE FOR STUDENTS TO SHARE IMAGES FROM PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AS STUDENTS LIVING AND WORKING THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Instagram: runewarkphoto1
Password: photo1

Materials Needed:
- Camera/SmartPhone Camera (case by case basis)
- Instagram app (free download)
- Whitagram app (free download) - or something comparable

PARTICIPATION:
- Self Portrait introductory image, mini bio/artist statement posted to shared account by noon on 3/24/20 - you must use a color background/this will be your color for the rest of the semester.
- Weekly Minimum Posts: 3 (each post can include up to 3 images, no collage/ tiling)
- Weekly Minimum Story: 1 (should be archived)
- Weekly Maximum Posts: 5 (3 images max per post)
- Weekly Maximum Stories: 3 (should be archived)

When exporting images from Lightroom for IG:
- 72 DPI
- Long Edge: 5 in

**Run image through Whitagram to add the color border before uploading to IG

@RUNEWARKPHOTO1

MATERIALS:

▸ Camera/SmartPhone Camera (case by case basis)

▸ Instagram app (free download)

▸ Whitagram app (free download) - **FOR MAC** - **FOR PC** -

PARTICIPATION:

▸ You will choose a color background from Whitagram to frame your image, and this will be your color for the rest of the semester. You will process all of your images through Whitagram to add the color border before uploading to IG

▸ Your introductory image/first post is the self-portrait from your homework assignment. Upload this image with a short introductory statement about yourself to the shared account by the end of day on 5/31/20 (color or black and white image)

▸ Regular weekly posts will begin on June 1st. (after all students have had the opportunity to post their self-portrait)

▸ Weekly Minimum Posts: 3   Each post can include up to 3 images, no collage or tiling, black and white images only.

▸ Weekly Maximum Posts: 5 Each post can include up to 3 images, no collage or tiling, black and white images only.

▸ Weekly Minimum Story: 1   Each story should be archived automatically, color or black and white images/video snippets.

▸ Weekly Maximum Stories: 3 (same as above)

▸ Include a credit line for yourself in each post and story, as well as a minimum of 3 hashtags for posts and 1 hashtag per story.